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DIGITAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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The article analyses various forms of political participation that are connected with digital sphere in countries such as Estonia, the United States of America, Finland.

Society passed through many different stages in its formation, starting from pre-industrial society, as a result of social development, scientific and technological progress, development of the institution of private property, there has been a transition to the information society [1]. Every person, citizen, individual and subject of the information society has a number of internal boundaries, beliefs and stable motives that encourage them to become more and more involved into political life of their state. The use of information and communications technologies partly in every sphere of life and political participation are the main reasons to include a person into the information society.

Political participation in our time is a fundamental factor in the development of a democratic post-industrial society and therefore it is a necessary step in the digitalization. The importance of political participation stems from the continuous development of all institutions of society, a lack of participation means an artificial brake on the development of public institutions, including political ones. The level of political participation as a form of social control, due to the development of information and communications technologies, shows a steady growth rate. Digital citizenship inherently implies an increase in citizen involvement in the political, social and economic spheres, because with digitalization, the process of direct citizen participation becomes much easier.

Modern technology makes possible to simplify many times the process of interaction between society and government by transferring communication into the digital world. Political participation is an integral part of social control, in such a concept political participation includes a certain number of instruments of social control. Citizens will not need to be present in person at voting stations, they will use electronic voting tools which are provided in the concept of digital citizenship. Also, citizens will not have to go to organisations or public authorities to make suggestions or complaints, the digital infrastructure will replace it. In addition to participation in elections, citizens influence decisions and policies by expressing their opinions on significant issues to which elected authorities have to respond, and it is impossible to deny that expressing one's opinion in a digital environment is much easier. Being a digital citizen means being able to use digital technologies to access information, from e-government and banking, to social media and digital e-commerce platforms [2].

Digital citizenship can be described as the ability of citizens to interact with the state through information and communications technologies. An important part of this concept is the response of the state or authorities to this interaction, so that it does not look like a monologue of citizens that will never be heard.

Digital citizenship has not been implemented in all countries so far, and it would seem that the countries that invest the largest amount of money and resources in digitalization should be in the lead, but this is not the case. Estonia is at the forefront of implementing digital citizenship in various forms, from e-voting to the conceptually new e-Resedency program. E-Resedency is a kind of membership that gives you a wide range of opportunities in the Estonian digital space: signing documents with an e-signature, creating companies, using public services. However, Estonia is not the only country in digitalization and the development of digital citizenship institutions; there are other variations in the development of this idea. According to the BBC ranking, Finland is in the second place. This country makes the most cashless payments, has one of the highest internet speeds and much more [3]. Also, the institutions of public control in Finland work properly because of the level of political involvement, which is due to the willingness of citizens in various trade union, social, youth organizations. They are interested in reforming their reality, which will enable them to take their lives to a new level of comfort. Access to information and transparency is the main areas of development at this stage, because this creates equal opportunities for knowledge, learning and political influence. In Scandinavian countries, digital citizenship is realized through public services in all areas, the multilingual resources for this are an advantage [4].

Also the United States succeeds in the development of information technology for the implementation of the principles of digital citizenship and it can be seen in the variety of services such as PayPal, Google and eBay. According to the UN e-government development rankings, the USA is in the top tier for e-government development [5]. In addition to the highly developed information and communications technology economy in

the USA, there is also the Regulation.gov portal. It is a source of information on the development of federal regulations and other related documents issued by the U.S. government. You can find, read, and comment on the regulatory issues that are of particular interest to you on this site. This resource is maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration. It is important to say about the adoption of the Evidence Based Policy Act of 2018, this act strengthens privacy rules, also regulates transparency and openness of data online [6].

We see a fundamental difference in the models of political participation as the implementation of digital citizenship in Estonia, Finland and the USA. Estonia has followed the path of creating technology to attract people, investment and resources. In Finland, civil society itself firstly takes the initiative to create useful resources, and the state facilitates this. The United States has chosen the path of citizen control over political processes, through electronic appeals and comments, as well as the development of ecosystems around which building an information society is much easier. We can see that there are different approaches to increasing the influence of information and communication technologies, to shaping the concept of digital citizenship and the digital environment in general, but the digitalization of the public, political, economic and social environment is inevitable.

Digitalization of people's lives, including political participation, enables faster growth of the economy, development of society and improvement of infrastructure. The growth rate will be high due to high-speed internet, rapid access to information, increased political involvement and bringing the level of interaction of citizens with political actors to a whole new level. It can be argued that political participation in the digital environment can be expressed in different ways. Each mode has a right to exist, as illustrated by the practical application of completely different approaches. The digitalization of political participation is as much an inevitable process as is the development of information and communication technology and the information society as a whole. It is worth noting that political participation will be steadily evolving and changing under the influence of new information and communications technologies in the near future.

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